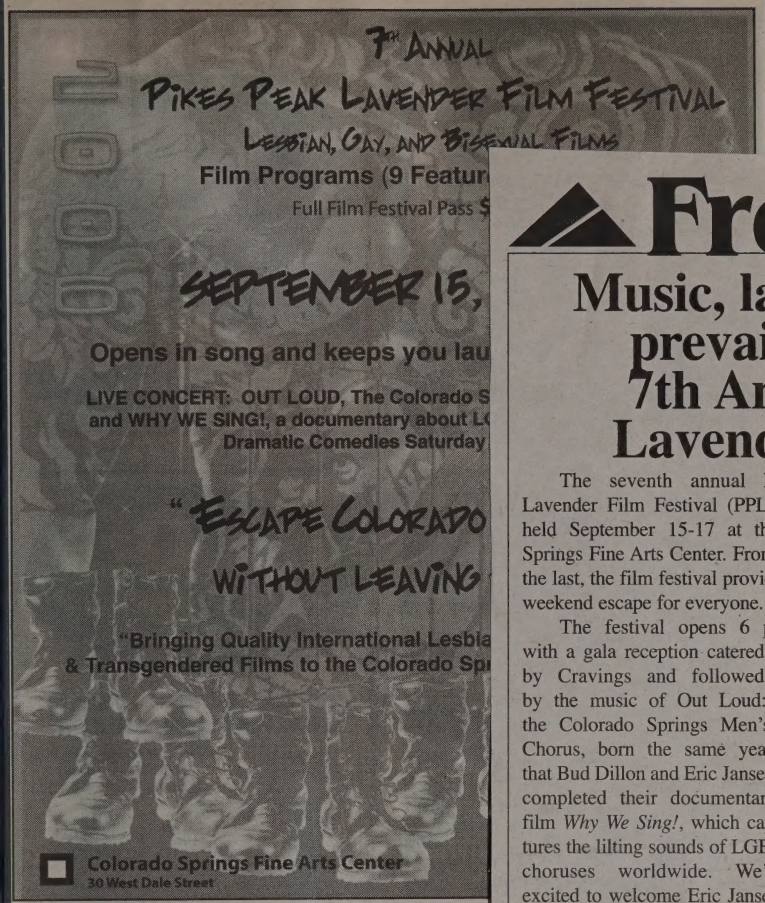

7th Annual
Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival
Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Films
Film Programs (9 Featur
Full Film Festival Pass $
SEPTEMBER 15,
Opens in song and keeps you lau
LIVE CONCERT: OUT LOUD, The Colorado S
and WHY WE SING!, a documentary about L
Dramatic Comedies Saturday
"Escape Colorado
without leaving
"Bringing Quality International Lesbia
& Transgendered Films to the Colorado Spr
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center
30 West Dale Street

Frontlines

Music, laughter, and friends prevail this year at the 7th Annual Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival!

The seventh annual Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival (PPLFF) will be held September 15-17 at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. From the first to the last, the film festival provides a perfect weekend escape for everyone.

The festival opens 6 p.m. Friday with a gala reception catered by Cravings and followed by the music of Out Loud: the Colorado Springs Men's Chorus, born the same year that Bud Dillon and Eric Jansen completed their documentary film *Why We Sing!*, which captures the lilting sounds of LGBT choruses worldwide. We're excited to welcome Eric Jansen, the film's writer and co-producer, to the festival. Wrap up opening night with the after-party at The Underground Bar.

Saturday and Sunday will be filled with funny lines in poignant movies. Even the more serious French film, *Oublier Cheyenne* (*Looking for Cheyenne*), 1 p.m. Saturday, has an amusing premise. One of the female protagonists, though unemployed, refuses financial help from anyone and attempts to live off the land in the countryside. Saturday's second film, *The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green*, is based on Eric Orner's comic strip. What teenage girl hasn't had a crush on a teacher? *Loving Annabelle*, winner of L.A. Outfest's Best Narrative Film and Best Actress, treats another serious subject with hilarious lines right to its surprising conclusion.

Since the PPLFF began, it has included a film by Q. Allan Brocka (*Rick and Steve*, *Seventy*, *Eating Out*) in its lineup every year. This year, Brocka's second feature, Boy Culture, is funnier and more clever than anything he's done before. Saturday concludes with a warm, elegant after-party at the fabulous new Metropolitain with complimentary hors d'oeuvres by Chef Brent Beavers.

The festival continues with a free continental brunch at the Fine Arts Center at 11 a.m. Sunday and a film that engages all genders and sexualities—Charles Busch's *A Very Serious Person*. Full of witty lines and marvelous character portrayals, it tells the poignant story of interpersonal need and companionship.

The three remaining Sunday films are all award winners. *Red Doors* is about a charmingly dysfunctional Chinese-American family that finds humor in the human condition. Last year we celebrated the passage of same-sex marriage in Spain. This year we laugh at ourselves in the wonderful Spanish farce, *Reinas* (*Queens*), that celebrates marriage with all the familiar faces of the Spanish female stars in Almodóvar's films. This year's closing film, *Puccini for Beginners*, opened the San Francisco and Los Angeles festivals. It's a funny film with all the drama and twists of an Italian opera—a great send-off, back to the real world, with lots of laughter in our hearts. Then we celebrate our wonderful weekend escape at a fabulous closing party with live music of Arch Hooks at The Underground Bar.

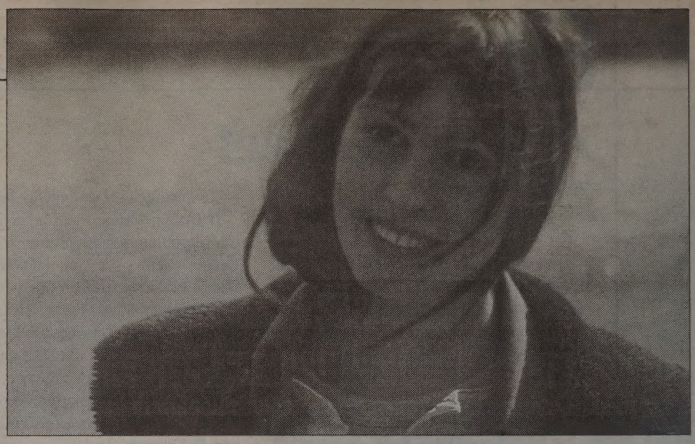
Full festival passes, $75, opening night passes, $25, and individual movie tickets are available online at www.pplff.org or at our ticket outlets: Toons Music & Videos, The Underground Bar, The Bookman, Spice of Life, and the Fine Arts Center box office, (719) 634-5583.

Escape Colorado Springs without leaving town at the Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival. You'll love your weekend of music, movies, laughter, and parties.

—Skip Cochrane and Alma Cremonesi

Community audition

Out Loud chorus brings life to Lavender Film Festival



Mila Dekker, looking oh-so-French in Looking for Cheyenne.

As they have done for the past seven years, seemingly against all odds in the conservative enclave of Colorado Springs, Lavender Film Festival organizers have selected a winning group of gay-, lesbian- and transgender-themed films for their annual event.

"We're still here!" says a dazed Alma Cremonesi, who has led the film's search committee since its inception.

This year's opening night gala will feature *Why We Sing!*, a celebratory feature-length documentary that explores the social and cultural power of gay, lesbian and transgender choral music. GALA (the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses) hosts an international festival once every four years, and this film was taped at the most recent gathering in Montreal, where some 5,000 singers converged.

Polly Bergen, Dana Ivey and PJ Verhoest crash in A Very Serious Person.

CAPSULE

Seventh annual Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 30 W. Dale St.

Friday, Sept. 15, through Sunday, Sept. 17

For complete schedule and to buy tickets online, visit lavenderfilm.org. Tickets: $10-$12 for individual shows; $25 for opening night; $75 for full festival pass.

Director Lawrence B. Dillon, also a tenor in the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, chose to focus on four groups. They include his own, the first to use the word "gay" in its name; Diverse Harmony from Seattle, a gay-straight alliance youth chorus; MUSE, Cincinnati's women's choir; and Transcendence Gospel Choir, the first all-transgender chorus.

Added to the mix are performance shots of choirs from Seattle, Paris, Hamburg, Denver and Washington, D.C., and a fascinating look at Tach'Shitim, a Jewish octet.

The screening of *Why We Sing!* will be preceded by a live concert from Out Loud: Colorado Springs Men's Chorus, formed last October by a group of eight men who practiced in the basement of downtown's First Congregational Church. In December, they sang for the first time in front of the congregation.

"We did 'Seasons of Love' from *Rent*, and a version of 'In the Bleak Midwinter.' We didn't have a conductor," remembers Guy McPherson, now board president of Out Loud. "The audience went wild."

The group decided to create a true community chorus and started rehearsals in January. Charlie Kurchinski of the Springs emerged as artistic director, and the choir's membership expanded.

On April 21, First Congregational Church overflowed with more than 800 audience members, including supporters from the Denver Men's Chorus, for Out Loud's first official concert. McPherson tears up as he remembers the power of that night.

"As we came up the stairs, they were chanting: 'Be proud, Out Loud! Be proud, Out Loud!"

The evening was a triumph, ending with "Seasons of Love," which the chorus will sing at Lavender's opening night. They also plan to perform "Bring Him Home" from *Les Miserables*, "I Am What I Am" from *La Cage aux Folles*, and a final song, "Why We Sing."

Just as the film explores these choral groups' roots in the peace, civil rights, feminist and gay rights movements of the '60s, '70s and '80s, McPherson understands the choruses' role as part of a social movement for acceptance. While the joy of song binds singers and audience, the experience "opens hearts and changes lives" through music, "a way of communicating that people are willing to listen to."

Out Loud's next public performance will be at First Congregational on Nov. 17-18.

Other highlights of the Lavender festival include a screening of Spain's *Queens* (*Reinas*), a slapstick romantic farce involving five indomitable middle-aged mothers coping with the drama surrounding their gay sons' impending participation in an historic public marriage ceremony.

Boy Culture, an American entry, offers strong performances by an ensemble cast, stylish filming and a lucid script that explores the inner-workings of a hustler, X, who's afraid he'll lose his edge if he allows himself to fall in love.

Not available for screening but heralded by press from other festivals are the coming-of-age tale *A Very Serious Person*, directed by and featuring Charles Busch; *Looking for Cheyenne*, a French social drama, and *Puccini for Beginners*, a romantic comedy about shifting sexual liaisons, structured as a three-act opera.

— Kathryn Eastburn

OUTtakes: A Queer Film Series

The Smokebrush Foundation has partnered with the Lavender Film Festival to screen a series of related films that won't be shown at the festival.

Follow My Voice: With the Music of Hedwig*, a tribute to John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch
Thursday, Sept. 14, 7:30 p.m.

The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg
Saturday, Sept. 30, 6 p.m.

Each show will be held at the Smokebrush Gallery (218 W. Colorado Ave.), and tickets will be $5 at the door. For more information, visit smokebrush.org.